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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 3334  
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY 0041  
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY 4478  
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY 2012  
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RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY 1504  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 3123  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0025  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 0153  
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RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0010  
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 7979  
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA PRIORITY 5102  
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 0325  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 1791  
RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 8480  
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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR S/GWI WENCHI YU

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TAGS: [KTIP](#) [KWMN](#) [JA](#)  
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR VERVEER CALLS FOR COOPERATION ON  
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT ISSUES

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11. (U) Summary. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Melanne Verveer proposed cooperation between Japan and the United States to improve the situation of women in a meeting in Tokyo with Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food Safety, Social Affairs and Gender Equality, Mizuho Fukushima. Possible areas might include reducing gender-based pay inequality, improving access to affordable child-care for working women, supporting and empowering female entrepreneurs, and increasing the number of women in positions of political and governmental leadership. End Summary.

12. (U) S/GWI Ambassador Verveer met December 10 with Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food Safety, Social Affairs and Gender Equality Mizuho Fukushima. Fukushima, who is also the head of the Social Democratic Party, agreed with Ambassador Verveer's assessment that with an increase in women's economic participation, GDP goes up. Both agreed that to facilitate greater economic participation by women there is a need to create more child care facilities. In Japan, there is an M-shaped graph that depicts the percentage of employed women by age, Fukushima noted. When women have children they drop out of the labor market. She said offering both paternity and maternity leave was one way of addressing this problem. According to Minister Fukushima, "Up to now Japan has not invested much in its children. The new administration aims to make this a society that values and invests in its children." Minister Fukushima said Japan was also discussing with South Korea the issue of how to raise birth rates while increasing women's participation in the economic sphere. She added that one notable trend in

South Korea was the increasing number of marriages to non-Korean women.

13. (U) Minister Fukushima encouraged the United States to find a way to ratify CEDAW (The Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women). Ambassador Verveer acknowledged that the United States was now among a small and dwindling number of countries that had not ratified. While the Obama administration vows to make CEDAW ratification one of its priorities, Ambassador Verveer pointed out the political difficulties of needing to obtain a Senate "super-majority" to ratify.

14. (U) Minister Fukushima said she had learned much from the United States and the Children's Defense Fund when she visited as an IVLP program invitee in the 1990's. She added that many of Japan's efforts in terms of protection orders and women's shelters were modeled on programs she observed at that time.

15. (U) Ambassador Verveer welcomed some of Japan's efforts in the Anti-Trafficking in Person (TIP) area, stating she had noticed an improvement in terms of signs and posters. She pointed out that TIP is a worldwide problem and Japan and the United States should look for ways to cooperate in combating TIP. In the United States, added the Ambassador, TIP is dealt with by a wide range of agencies across the government. Keiko Takegawa, Deputy Director General for Gender Equality, pointed out that the situation was similar in Japan with the addition that there was an Inter-Ministerial Liaison Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons that served to coordinate the anti-TIP actions of the various agencies. Minister Fukushima stated that as a lawyer in the private

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sector she had worked to defend Asian women who were being protected by the Asian Women's Shelter. The Minister stated that Japan was also aware of some labor trafficking and that there were cases in which mostly Chinese workers who had entered the country under the trainee visa program had ended up in bad work situations. The government, she said, is looking into this situation.

16. (U) Asked what the Government of Japan was doing to increase the number of women leaders in government, Minister Fukushima said Japan had a goal of 30% of government employees being women by 2020. At present her ministry was planning a meeting of all 27 Japanese women mayors and 3 women governors, to further draw up plans. She agreed though that more needs to be done, particularly in increasing the number of women at the managerial level. Japanese women she pointed out are "extremely well-educated." Asked for ideas of areas the United States and Japan could cooperate on in empowering women, Minister Fukushima said, "We need to find ways of improving the work-life balance." She added that perhaps some kind of an affirmative action policy would be necessary. The minister also said Japan needed to further improve its protective shelter system for women as well as change the legal system so that protective orders are more effective.

17. (U) Ambassador Verveer closed by offering cooperation in terms of exchanges and conferences. She pointed out that Japan was the host of APEC in 2010 to be followed by the United States in 2011. She suggested that perhaps Japan and the United States could cooperate in women's economic development programs, and/or setting up a women's entrepreneurship summit for women from the APEC countries.

18. (U) This cable was cleared by S/GWI.  
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